

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
ROANOKE DIVISION

APR 07 2015

JULIA C. DUDLEY, CLERK
BY: *[Signature]*
DEPUTY CLERK

Bruce A. Estes, John W. East, Lawrence E. Corbis
Plaintiff,

v. Harold Clarke, Mark Engle, B. Wright
J. Morrison, A. DeBord, M. Penter.

Civil Action No. 715CV00154

Defendant(s).

VERIFIED STATEMENT

I, the plaintiff in this action, have been advised of the requirements regarding exhaustion of administrative remedies as outlined in 42 U.S.C. 1997e and now submit this verified statement.

(Choose only one):

☒ I have exhausted my administrative remedies as to each of the claims raised in my complaint by appealing my claims to the highest available level of the administrative remedies procedures. *Copies of the record of the proceedings are attached to this statement.*

☐ I have attempted to exhaust my administrative remedies but my grievance was rejected as untimely. I have appealed that determination to the highest level available. *I have attached documentation verifying my attempts to exhaust administrative remedies.*

☐ There are no administrative remedies available to me at this time, either because the issue I raise is nongrievable, or because there is no grievance procedure at the correctional facility at which I am confined. *I have attached documentation verifying my attempts to exhaust administrative remedies.*

☐ This cause of action arose at _____, and I am now being housed at another facility, _____. Therefore, I do not believe I have administrative remedies available at this time.

I affirm that I am the plaintiff in this action and I know the content of the above statement; that it is true of my own knowledge, except as to those matters that are stated in it to be based on my own information and belief; and to those matters, I also believe them to be true. I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

3-26-15
DATE

[Signature]
SIGNATURE OF AFFIANT



JUL 17 2014

REGULAR GRIEVANCE

GRIEVANCE DEPT
River North Correctional Center

Log Number: _____

Estes	Bruce	1185224	A-3	301-B
Last Name	First	Number	Building	Cell/Bed Number

WHAT IS YOUR COMPLAINT? (Provide information from the informal process: Attach Informal Complaint or other documentation of informal process.) The common fare diet offered as a "religious diet" does not meet the kosher diet standards outlined in the Torah that I adhere to as a Jew, the current vegetable based diet is not a suitable substitute for a kosher diet, the common fare diet may meet DOC Policy as stated by Mrs. Morrison in the attached complaint but absolutely does not meet Biblical dietary laws, this failure to provide a proper diet based on the Biblical dietary laws I adhere to is denying me a religious required diet and forcing me to eat a diet that is not Biblically acceptable for me as a Jew. In addition to preparation of certain items on the common fare diet ie "Tung robs" renders this item unclear and UNCONSUMABLE by me as a Jewish male. This issue affects me personally as I am being denied a proper kosher religious diet.

What action do you want taken? Provide a proper kosher diet as outlined in the Biblical dietary laws and to meet kosher standards.

Grievant's Signature: BEB Date: 7-16-14

Warden/Superintendent's Office: _____
Date Received: _____

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JUL 23 2014
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WESTERN REGION



INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING: You are required per Operating Procedure 866.1 *Offender Grievance Procedure* to attempt to resolve your complaint in good faith prior to filing a regular grievance. You must submit your grievance within 30 days from the date of occurrence or discovery of incident. Only one issue per grievance will be addressed. Write your issue only in the space provided on the grievance form, preferably in ink. Regular grievances are submitted through the institutional mail to the Warden/Superintendent's office and a receipt issued within 2 working days from received date if the grievance is not returned during intake.

INTAKE: Grievances should be accepted for logging unless returned for the following reason(s):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Grievable. This issue has been defined as non-grievable in accordance with Operating Procedure 866.1. <input type="checkbox"/> Disciplinary Procedure. You may appeal hearing decisions, penalties, and/or procedural errors under the provisions in Operating Procedure 861.1, <i>Offender Discipline</i> . <input type="checkbox"/> Matters beyond the control of the Department of Corrections
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does not affect you personally
<input type="checkbox"/>	Limited. You have been limited by the Warden/Superintendent
<input type="checkbox"/>	More than one issue – resubmit with only one issue
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Expired Filing Period. Grievances are to be filed within 30 calendar days from date of occurrence/incident, or discovery of the occurrence/incident except in instances: 1) beyond the offender's control or, 2) where a more restrictive time frame has been established in Operating Procedures to prevent loss of remedy or the issue from becoming moot. <i>you were transferred to RNCC on 12-19-13, much longer than 30 days. The Common Fare diet changed 4-28-14, which still exceeds 30 days.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Repetitive. This issue has been grieved previously in Grievance #
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inquiry on behalf of other offenders.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Group Complaints or Petitions. Grievances are to be submitted by individuals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vulgar/Insolent or Threatening Language. YOU MAY BE CHARGED IN ACCORDANCE WITH OPERATING PROCEDURE 861.1 <i>OFFENDER DISCIPLINE</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Photocopy/Carbon Copy. You must submit the original grievance for responses and appeals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grievances Filed Regarding Another Institution. This grievance is being returned to you for you to submit to:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Informal Procedure. You have not used the informal process to <u>resolve</u> your complaint
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient Information. You need to provide the following information to the Grievance Office within 5 days before the grievance can be processed: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	The issue in the grievance is different from the issue in the informal complaint

Institutional Ombudsman/Grievance Coordinator: *B. Allen* Date: *7-17-14*

If you disagree with this decision, you have 5 calendar days from date of receipt to submit to the Regional Ombudsman for a review of the intake decision. The Regional Ombudsman's decision is final.

Regional Review of Intake (within 5 working days of receipt)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The intake decision is being upheld in accordance with Operating Procedure 866.1 <i>Offender Grievance Procedure</i> .
<input type="checkbox"/>	The intake decision is being returned to you because the 5 day time limit for review has been exceeded.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The grievance meets the criteria for intake and is being returned to the Warden/Superintendent for logging.

Regional Ombudsman: *Curtis A. Pan* re: *expired issue* Date: *07.23.2014*

WITHDRAWAL OF GRIEVANCE: I wish to voluntarily withdraw this grievance. I understand that by withdrawing this grievance, there will be no further action on this issue nor will I be able to file any other grievance in the future on this issue.

Offender Signature: _____ Date: _____
Staff Witness: _____ Date: _____



Grievance Receipt

866.1 A-3

DOC Location: RNCC River North Correctional Center

Report generated by Martinez, D B

Report run on 07/14/2014 at 11:57 AM

Grievance Number: RNCC-14-INF-03675Next Action Date: 7/29/2014 12:00 AM

On this date:	07/14/2014	I have received a statement from:
Estes, Bruce A	1185224	River North Correctional Center
	of	A-3-301-B
<i>(Offender Name and DOC#)</i>		<i>(Filed Location and Housing)</i>
Setting out the following complaint:		
Offender complained that the Common Fare diet is not a Kosher mea, therefore denying him his religious rights as a jewish offender.		
<i>(Signature)</i>		<i>(Title)</i>

Regional ombudsman

7-18-14

The common fare diet does not meet my dietary needs as a Jewish inmate, as far as a expired filing period goes the common fare diet is ongoing so there can be no expired filing period as common fare is served daily and violates the Biblical dietary laws I adhere to as a Jew, a proper kosher diet needs to be provided so that I am not continually forced to violate my religious diet and Biblical dietary laws by eating unclearly unkosher foods served every day.

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83-225

for

83-225

for



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REGULAR GRIEVANCE

GRIEVANCE DEPARTMENT

Log Number: _____

Estes	Bruce	1185724	A	301-B
Last Name	First	Number	Building	Cell/Bed Number

WHAT IS YOUR COMPLAINT? (Provide information from the informal process: Attach Informal Complaint response or other documentation of informal process.)

As I state in the attached complaint, according to the Biblical kosher laws no kosher meals are offered to me a Jewish inmate who follows the kosher Biblical dietary laws. Common fare is not a kosher meal and it does not meet the kosher standards in any way and cannot be served as or substitute a kosher meal. I am being denied a kosher diet as is required by my faith so my religious rights are being violated by leaving me no choice but to eat unkosher foods as are required in the practice of my faith as a Jew. Ms. DeBord says common fare is a kosher meal when it is absolutely not since no observant Jewish person is involved in the preparation of common fare and none of the food served nor common fare are certified kosher nor are utensils trays etc kept kosher or kosher certified.

I have attached information explaining kosher, this information will help understand kosher and why common fare is not kosher.

What action do you want taken? (1) Properly educate VADOC kitchen staff on what kosher is, (2)

Make kosher meals available to me a Jewish inmate in the dining hall daily at each meal.

It doesn't really matter what action I want taken to resolve these issues as you will circumvent the grievance procedure and return this grievance but I made up statements above of what action I want taken.

Grievant's Signature: 

Date: 3-17-15

Warden/Superintendent's Office: _____

Date Received: _____

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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Does not affect you personally (This issue did not cause you personal loss or harm) <i>You are Not a Common Fare Participant.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Limited. You have been limited by the Warden/Superintendent
<input type="checkbox"/>	More than one issue – resubmit with only one issue
<input type="checkbox"/>	Expired Filing Period. Grievances are to be filed within 30 calendar days from date of occurrence/incident, or discovery of the occurrence/incident except in instances: 1) beyond the offender's control or, 2) where a more restrictive time frame has been established in Operating Procedures to prevent loss of remedy or the issue from becoming moot.
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Vulgar/Insolent or Threatening Language. YOU MAY BE CHARGED IN ACCORDANCE WITH OPERATING PROCEDURE 861.1 <i>OFFENDER DISCIPLINE</i>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Informal Procedure. You have not used the informal process to <u>resolve</u> your complaint
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient Information. You need to provide the following information to the Grievance Office within 5 days before the grievance can be processed: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	The issue in the grievance is different from the issue in the informal complaint

Institutional Ombudsman/Grievance Coordinator: B. Allen Date: 3-13-15

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Regional Review of Intake (within 5 working days of receipt)

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<input type="checkbox"/>	The intake decision is being returned to you because the 5 day time limit for review has been exceeded.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The grievance meets the criteria for intake and is being returned to the Warden/Superintendent for logging.

Regional Ombudsman: Curtis A. Lane *re: No personal harm nor loss as CF is offered* Date: 3.19.2015

WITHDRAWAL OF GRIEVANCE: I wish to voluntarily withdraw this grievance. I understand that by withdrawing this grievance, there will be no further action on this issue nor will I be able to file any other grievance in the future on this issue.

Offender Signature: _____ Date: _____

Staff Witness: _____ Date: _____

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Informal Complaint

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING: Briefly write your issue in the space provided on the Informal Complaint form, preferably in ink. Only one issue per Informal Complaint. Place your complaint in the designated area at your facility. A receipt is issued within 2 working days from the date received if the informal complaint is not returned during intake. If no response is received within 15 calendar days, you may proceed in filing a regular grievance. You may utilize your receipt as evidence of your attempt to resolve your complaint.

An Informal Complaint is not required for an alleged incident of sexual abuse.

B. Estes

1185274

A-301

Offender Name

Offender Number

Housing Assignment

☐ Unit Manager/Supervisor

☒ Food Service

☐ Treatment Program Supervisor

☐ Personal Property

☐ Commissary

☐ Mailroom

☐ Medical Administrator

☐ Other (Please Specify):

Briefly explain the nature of your complaint (be specific):

River North Correctional Center - VA Doc does not offer or provide a Kosher diet in any way. He offered "Common Fare" diet is not Kosher, as a observant Jewish inmate who observes the Biblical dietary laws and Jewish laws of Kashrut (Kosher) I'm being denied a Kosher diet since no Kosher is available, this prevents me from practicing my faith and therefore violates my constitutional rights.

Offender Signature

Date

Offenders - Do Not Write Below This Line

Date Received: 3-10-2015

Tracking # RNCC-15-INF-01172

Response Due: 3-25-2015

Assigned to: Food Service

Action Taken/Response:

Common Fare meals are Kosher and are provided to common fare participants.

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A. DeBord

A. DeBord / Asst Food
Ops Director

3/11/15

Respondent Signature

Printed Name and Title

Date

WITHDRAWAL OF INFORMAL COMPLAINT:

I wish to voluntarily withdraw this Informal Complaint. I understand that by withdrawing this Informal Complaint, I will not receive a response nor will I be able to file any other Informal Complaint or Grievance on this issue.

Offender Signature:

Date:

Staff Witness Signature:

Date:

Kashrut is Hebrew for Kosher

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Kashrut: Jewish Dietary Laws

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Level: Intermediate WESTERN REGION

- Kashrut is a set of biblical dietary restrictions
- Certain foods cannot be eaten
- Certain foods must be separated
- Certification makes it easier to identify kosher food

Kashrut is the body of Jewish law dealing with what foods we can and cannot eat and how those foods must be prepared and eaten. "Kashrut" comes from the Hebrew root Kaf-Shin-Reish, meaning fit, proper or correct. It is the same root as the more commonly known word "kosher," which describes food that meets these standards. The word "kosher" can also be used, and often is used, to describe ritual objects that are made in accordance with Jewish law and are fit for ritual use.

Contrary to popular misconception, rabbis or other religious officials do not "bless" food to make it kosher. There are blessings that observant Jews recite over food before eating it, but these blessings have nothing to do with making the food kosher. Food can be kosher without a rabbi or priest ever becoming involved with it: the vegetables from your garden are undoubtedly kosher (as long as they don't have any bugs, which are not kosher!). However, in our modern world of processed foods, it is difficult to know what ingredients are in your food and how they were processed, so it is helpful to have a rabbi examine the food and its processing and assure kosher consumers that the food is kosher. This certification process is discussed below.

Kosher dietary laws are observed all year round, not just during Pesach (Passover). There are additional dietary restrictions during Pesach, and many foods that are kosher for year-round use are not "kosher for Passover." A bagel, for example, can be kosher for year-round use but is certainly not kosher for Passover! Foods that are kosher for Passover, however, are always kosher for year-round use.

There is no such thing as "kosher-style" food. Kosher is not a style of cooking. Chinese food can be kosher if it is prepared in accordance with Jewish law, and there are many fine kosher Chinese restaurants in Philadelphia and New York. Traditional Ashkenazic Jewish foods like knishes, bagels, blintzes, and matzah ball soup can all be non-kosher if not prepared in accordance with Jewish law. When a restaurant calls itself "kosher-style," it usually means that the restaurant serves these traditional Jewish foods, and it almost invariably means that the food is not actually kosher.

Food that is not kosher is commonly referred to as treif (lit. torn, from the commandment not to eat animals that have been torn by other animals).

Why Do We Observe the Laws of Kashrut?

Many modern Jews think that the laws of kashrut are simply primitive health regulations that have become obsolete with modern methods of food preparation. There is no question that some of the dietary laws have some beneficial health effects. For example, the laws regarding kosher slaughter are so sanitary that kosher butchers and slaughterhouses have been exempted from many USDA regulations.

However, health is not the only reason for Jewish dietary laws. Many of the laws of kashrut have no known connection with health. To the best of our modern scientific knowledge, there is no reason why camel or rabbit meat (both treif) is any less healthy than cow or goat meat. In addition, some of the health benefits to be derived from kashrut were not made obsolete by the refrigerator. For example, there is some evidence that eating meat and dairy together interferes with digestion, and no modern food preparation technique reproduces the health benefit of the kosher law of eating them separately.

In recent years, several secular sources that have seriously looked into this matter have acknowledged that health does not explain these prohibitions. Some have suggested that the prohibitions are instead derived from environmental considerations. For example, a camel (which is not kosher) is more useful as a beast of burden than as a source of food. In the Middle Eastern climate, the pig consumes a quantity of food that is disproportional to its value as a food source. But again, these are not reasons that come from Jewish tradition.

The short answer to why Jews observe these laws is: because the Torah says so. The Torah does not specify any reason for these laws, and for a Torah-observant, traditional Jew, there is no need for any other reason. Some have suggested that the laws of kashrut fall into the category of "chukkim," laws for which there is no reason. We show our obedience to G-d by following these laws even though we do not know the reason. Others, however, have tried to ascertain G-d's reason for imposing these laws.

In his book "To Be a Jew" (an excellent resource on traditional Judaism), Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin suggests that the dietary laws are designed as a call to holiness. The ability to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, pure and defiled, the sacred and the profane, is very important in Judaism. Imposing rules on what you can and cannot eat ingrains that kind of self control, requiring us to learn to control even our most basic, primal instincts.

Donin also points out that the laws of kashrut elevate the simple act of eating into a religious ritual. The Jewish dinner table is often compared to the Temple altar in rabbinic literature. A Jew who observes the laws of kashrut cannot eat a meal without being reminded of the fact that he is a Jew.

How Difficult is it to Keep Kosher?

People who do not keep kosher often tell me how difficult it is. Actually, keeping kosher is not particularly difficult in and of itself; what makes it difficult to keep kosher is the fact that the rest of the world does not do so.

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As we shall see below, the basic underlying rules are fairly simple. If you buy your meat at a kosher butcher and buy only kosher certified products at the market, the only thing you need to think about is the separation of meat and dairy.

Keeping kosher only becomes difficult when you try to eat in a non-kosher restaurant, or at the home of a person who does not keep kosher. In those situations, your lack of knowledge about your host's ingredients and food preparation techniques make it very difficult to keep kosher. Some commentators have pointed out, however, that this may well have been part of what G-d had in mind: to make it more difficult for us to socialize with those who do not share our religion.

General Rules

Although the details of kashrut are extensive, the laws all derive from a few fairly simple, straightforward rules:

1. Certain animals may not be eaten at all. This restriction includes the flesh, organs, eggs and milk of the forbidden animals.
2. Of the animals that may be eaten, the birds and mammals must be killed in accordance with Jewish law.
3. All blood must be drained from meat and poultry or broiled out of it before it is eaten.
4. Certain parts of permitted animals may not be eaten.
5. Fruits and vegetables are permitted, but must be inspected for bugs (which cannot be eaten)
6. Meat (the flesh of birds and mammals) cannot be eaten with dairy. Fish, eggs, fruits, vegetables and grains can be eaten with either meat or dairy. (According to some views, fish may not be eaten with meat).
7. Utensils (including pots and pans and other cooking surfaces) that have come into contact with meat may not be used with dairy, and vice versa. Utensils that have come into contact with non-kosher food may not be used with kosher food. This applies only where the contact occurred while the food was hot.
8. Grape products made by non-Jews may not be eaten.
9. There are a few other rules that are not universal.

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The Details

Animals that may not be eaten

Of the "beasts of the earth" (which basically refers to land mammals with the exception of swarming rodents), you may eat any animal that has cloven hooves and chews its cud. Lev. 11:3; Deut. 14:6. Any land mammal that does not have both of these qualities is forbidden. The Torah specifies that the camel, the rock badger, the hare and the pig are not kosher because each lacks one of these two qualifications. Cattle, sheep, goats, deer and bison are kosher.

Of the things that are in the waters, you may eat anything that has fins and scales. Lev. 11:9; Deut. 14:9. Thus, shellfish such as lobsters, oysters, shrimp, clams and crabs are all forbidden. Fish like tuna, carp, salmon and herring are all permitted.

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For birds, the criteria is less clear. The Torah provides a list of forbidden birds (Lev. 11:13-19; Deut. 14:11-18), but does not specify why these particular birds are forbidden. All of the birds on the list are birds of prey or scavengers, thus the rabbis inferred that this was the basis for the distinction. Other birds are permitted, such as chicken, geese, ducks and turkeys. However, some people avoid turkey, because it was unknown at the time of the giving of the Torah, leaving room for doubt.

Of the "winged swarming things" (winged insects), a few are specifically permitted (Lev. 11:22), but the Sages are no longer certain which ones they are, so all have been forbidden. There are communities that have a tradition about what species are permitted, and in those communities some insects are eaten.

Rodents, reptiles, amphibians, and insects (except as mentioned above) are all forbidden. Lev. 11:29-30, 42-43.

Some authorities require a post-mortem examination of the lungs of cattle, to determine whether the lungs are free from adhesions. If the lungs are free from such adhesions, the animal is deemed "glatt" (that is, "smooth"). In certain circumstances, an animal can be kosher without being glatt; however, the stringency of keeping "glatt kosher" has become increasingly common in recent years, and you would be hard-pressed to find any kosher meat that is not labeled as "glatt kosher."

As mentioned above, any product derived from these forbidden animals, such as their milk, eggs, fat, or organs, also cannot be eaten. Rennet, an enzyme used to harden cheese, is often obtained from non-kosher animals, thus kosher hard cheese can be difficult to find.

Kosher slaughtering

The mammals and birds that may be eaten must be slaughtered in accordance with Jewish law. (Deut. 12:21). We may not eat animals that died of natural causes (Deut. 14:21) or that were killed by other animals. In addition, the animal must have no disease or flaws in the organs at the time of slaughter. These restrictions do not apply to fish; only to the flocks and herds (Num. 11:22).

Ritual slaughter is known as shechitah, and the person who performs the slaughter is called a shochet, both from the Hebrew root Shin-Cheit-Teit. The method of slaughter is a quick, deep stroke across the throat with a perfectly sharp blade with no nicks or unevenness. This method is painless, causes unconsciousness within two seconds, and is widely recognized as the most humane method of slaughter possible.

Another advantage of shechitah is that it ensures rapid, complete draining of the blood, which is also necessary to render the meat kosher.

The shochet is not simply a butcher; he must be a pious man, well-trained in Jewish law, particularly as it relates to kashrut. In smaller, more remote communities, the rabbi and the shochet were often the same person.

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Draining of Blood

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The Torah prohibits consumption of blood. Lev. 7:26-27; Lev. 17:10-14. This is the only dietary law that has a reason specified in Torah: we do not eat blood because the life of the animal (literally, the soul of the animal) is contained in the blood. This applies only to the blood of birds and mammals, not to fish blood. Thus, it is necessary to remove all blood from the flesh of kosher animals.

The first step in this process occurs at the time of slaughter. As discussed above, shechitah allows for rapid draining of most of the blood.

The remaining blood must be removed, either by broiling or soaking and salting. Liver may only be kashered by the broiling method, because it has so much blood in it and such complex blood vessels. This final process must be completed within 72 hours after slaughter, and before the meat is frozen or ground. Most butchers and all frozen food vendors take care of the soaking and salting for you, but you should always check this when you are buying someplace you are unfamiliar with.

An egg that contains a blood spot may not be eaten. This isn't very common, but I find them once in a while. It is a good idea to break an egg into a glass and check it before you put it into a heated pan, because if you put a blood-stained egg into a heated pan, the pan becomes non-kosher. If your recipe calls for multiple eggs, break each one into the glass separately, so you don't waste all of the eggs if the last one is not kosher!

Forbidden Fats and Nerves

The sciatic nerve and its adjoining blood vessels may not be eaten. The process of removing this nerve is time consuming and not cost-effective, so most American kosher slaughterers simply sell the hind quarters to non-kosher butchers.

A certain kind of fat, known as chelev, which surrounds the vital organs and the liver, may not be eaten. Kosher butchers remove this. Modern scientists have found biochemical differences between this type of fat and the permissible fat around the muscles and under the skin.

Fruits and Vegetables

All fruits and vegetables are kosher (but see the note regarding Grape Products below). However, bugs and worms that may be found in some fruits and vegetables are not kosher. Fruits and vegetables that are prone to this sort of thing should be inspected to ensure that they contain no bugs. Leafy vegetables like lettuce and herbs and flowery vegetables like broccoli and cauliflower are particularly prone to bugs and should be inspected carefully. Strawberries and raspberries can also be problematic. The Star-K kosher certification organization has a very nice overview of the fruits and vegetables prone to this and the procedure for addressing it in each type.

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Separation of Meat and Dairy

On three separate occasions, the Torah tells us not to "boil a kid in its mother's milk." (Ex. 23:19; Ex. 34:26; Deut. 14:21). The Oral Torah explains that this passage prohibits eating meat and dairy together. The rabbis extended this prohibition to include not eating milk and poultry together. In addition, the Talmud prohibits cooking meat and fish together or serving them on the same plates, because it is considered to be unhealthy. It is, however, permissible to eat fish and dairy together, and it is quite common (lox and cream cheese, for example). It is also permissible to eat dairy and eggs together.

This separation includes not only the foods themselves, but the utensils, pots and pans with which they are cooked, the plates and flatware from which they are eaten, the dishwashers or dishpans in which they are cleaned, the sponges with which they are cleaned and the towels with which they are dried. A kosher household will have at least two sets of pots, pans and dishes: one for meat and one for dairy. See Utensils below for more details.

One must wait a significant amount of time between eating meat and dairy. Opinions differ, and vary from three to six hours after meat. This is because fatty residues and meat particles tend to cling to the mouth. From dairy to meat, however, one need only rinse one's mouth and eat a neutral solid like bread, unless the dairy product in question is also of a type that tends to stick in the mouth.

The Yiddish words fleishik (meat), milchik (dairy) and pareve (neutral) are commonly used to describe food or utensils that fall into one of those categories.

Note that even the smallest quantity of dairy (or meat) in something renders it entirely dairy (or meat) for purposes of kashrut. For example, most margarines are dairy for kosher purposes, because they contain a small quantity of whey or other dairy products to give it a buttery taste. Animal fat is considered meat for purposes of kashrut. You should read the ingredients very carefully, even if the product is kosher-certified.

Utensils

Utensils (pots, pans, plates, flatware, etc., etc.) must also be kosher. A utensil picks up the kosher "status" (meat, dairy, pareve, or treif) of the food that is cooked in it or eaten off of it, and transmits that status back to the next food that is cooked in it or eaten off of it. Thus, if you cook chicken soup in a saucepan, the pan becomes meat. If you thereafter use the same saucepan to heat up some warm milk, the fleishik status of the pan is transmitted to the milk, and the milchik status of the milk is transmitted to the pan, making both the pan and the milk a forbidden mixture.

Kosher status can be transmitted from the food to the utensil or from the utensil to the food only in the presence of heat, (including hot spices) or prolonged contact, thus if you are eating cold food in a non-kosher establishment, the condition of the plates is not an issue. I knew an Orthodox rabbi who would eat ice cream at Friendly's, for example, because the ice cream was kosher and the utensils are irrelevant for such cold food.

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Likewise, you could use the same knife to slice cold cuts and cheese, as long as you clean it in between, but this is not really a recommended procedure, because it increases the likelihood of mistakes.

Stove tops and sinks routinely become non-kosher utensils, because they routinely come in contact with both meat and dairy in the presence of heat. It is necessary, therefore, to use dishpans when cleaning dishes (don't soak them directly in the sink) and to use separate spoon rests and trivets when putting things down on the stove top.

Dishwashers are a kashrut problem. If you are going to use a dishwasher for both meat and dairy in a kosher home, you either need to have separate dish racks or you need to run the dishwasher in between meat and dairy loads.

You should use separate towels and pot holders for meat and dairy. Routine laundering kashers such items, so you can simply launder them between using them for meat and dairy.

Certain kinds of utensils can be "kashered" if you make a mistake and use it with both meat and dairy. Consult a rabbi for guidance if this situation occurs.

Grape Products

The restrictions on grape products derive from the laws against using products of idolatry. Wine was commonly used in the rituals of all ancient religions, and wine was routinely sanctified for pagan purposes while it was being processed. For this reason, use of wines and other grape products made by non-Jews was prohibited. (Whole grapes are not a problem, nor are whole grapes in fruit cocktail).

For the most part, this rule only affects wine and grape juice. This becomes a concern with many fruit drinks or fruit-flavored drinks, which are often sweetened with grape juice. You may also notice that some baking powders are not kosher, because baking powder is sometimes made with cream of tartar, a by-product of wine making. All beer used to be kosher, but this is no longer the case because fruity beers made with grape products have become more common.

Additional Rules

There are a few additional considerations that come up, that you may hear discussed in more sophisticated discussions of kashrut.

Bishul Yisroel

In certain circumstances, a Jew (that is, someone who is required to keep kosher) must be involved in the preparation of food for it to be kosher. This rule is discussed in depth under Food Fit for a King on the Star-K kosher certification website.

Cholov Yisroel

An ancient rule required that a Jew must be present from the time of milking to the time of bottling to ensure that the milk actually came from kosher animals and did not become mixed with milk from non-kosher animals. Milk that is observed

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in this way is referred to as Cholov Yisroel, and some people will consume only Cholov Yisroel dairy products. However, in the United States, federal law relating to the production of milk is so strict that many Orthodox sources accept any milk as kosher. You will sometimes see high-level discussions of kashrut address whether a product is Cholov Yisroel or non-Cholov Yisroel. See a more complete discussion under Cholov Yisroel: Does a Neshama Good on the Star-K kosher certification website.

Mevushal

Most kosher wines in America are made using a process of pasteurization called mevushal, which addresses some of the kashrut issues related to grape beverages. See The Art of Kosher Wine Making on the Star-K kosher certification website.

Kashrut Certification

The task of keeping kosher is greatly simplified by widespread kashrut certification. Products that have been certified as kosher are labeled with a mark called a hekhsher (from the same Hebrew root as the word "kosher") that ordinarily identifies the rabbi or organization that certified the product. Approximately 3/4 of all prepackaged foods have some kind of kosher certification, and most major brands have reliable Orthodox certification.

The process of certification does not involve "blessing" the food; rather, it involves examining the ingredients used to make the food, examining the process by which the food is prepared, and periodically inspecting the processing facilities to make sure that kosher standards are maintained.

These symbols are widely-accepted hekhshers commonly found on products throughout the United States. These symbols are registered trademarks of kosher certification organizations, and cannot be placed on a food label without the organization's permission. Click the symbols to visit the websites of these organizations. With a little practice, it is very easy to spot these hekhshers on food labels, usually near the product name, occasionally near the list of ingredients. There are many other certifications available, of varying degrees of strictness.



The most controversial certification is the K, a plain letter K found on products asserted to be kosher. A letter of the alphabet cannot be trademarked, so any manufacturer can put a K on a product, even without any supervision at all. For example, Jell-O brand gelatin puts a K on its product, even though every reliable Orthodox authority agrees that Jell-O is not kosher. On the other hand, some very reliable rabbis will certify products without having a trademark to offer, and their certifications will also have only a "K." Most other kosher certification marks are trademarked and cannot legally be used without the permission of the certifying organization. The certifying organization assures you that the product is kosher according to their standards, but standards vary.

It is becoming increasingly common for kosher certifying organizations to indicate whether the product is fleishik (meat), milchik (dairy) or pareve (neutral). If the product is dairy, it will frequently have a D or the word Dairy next to the kashrut symbol. If it is

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meat, the word Meat may appear near the symbol (usually not an M, because that might be confused with "milchik"). If it is pareve, the word Pareve (or Parev) may appear near the symbol (Not a P! That means kosher for Passover!). If no such clarification appears, you should read the ingredient list carefully to determine whether the product is meat, dairy or pareve.

Kosher certification organizations charge manufacturers a fee for kosher certification. This fee covers the expenses of researching the ingredients in the product and inspecting the facilities used to manufacture the product. There are some who have complained that these certification costs increase the cost of the products to non-Jewish, non-kosher consumers; however, the actual cost of such certification is so small relative to the overall cost of production that most manufacturers cannot even calculate it. The cost is more than justified by the increase in sales it produces: although observant Jews are only a small fragment of the marketplace, kosher certification is also a useful (though not complete) point of reference for many Muslims, Seventh Day Adventists and vegetarians. In addition, many people prefer kosher products because they believe them to be cleaner, healthier or better than non-kosher products. It is worth noting that kosher certifiers are not the only organizations that charge for the privilege of displaying their on a product: some charitable organizations allow manufacturers to display their logo in exchange for a donation, but unlike kosher certifiers, those charities do not perform any service in exchange for that payment.

Do All Jews Keep Kosher?

According to the 2000 National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), 21% of American Jews report that they keep kosher in the home. This includes the vast majority of people who identify themselves as Orthodox, as well as many Conservative and Reconstructionist Jews and some Reform Jews.

Part of that 21% keeps kosher at home, but eat non-kosher food out of the home to one degree or another. Some will eat cooked food in a restaurant or a non-kosher home, as long as the meal is either vegetarian or uses only kosher meat and no dairy products. Some will eat non-kosher meat in restaurants, but only if the meat comes from a kosher animal and is not served with dairy products. Some will go... dare I say? ... whole hog and eat bacon cheeseburgers out of the home while keeping a strictly kosher household.

Even within the home, standards of kashrut that people employ vary. The strictest people will eat only foods that have reliable Orthodox kosher certification, eating only glatt-kosher certified meats and specially certified dairy products. They will not eat cooked food in a restaurant unless the restaurant has reliable Orthodox certification, and they are unlikely to accept an invitation to dinner from anyone who is not known to share their high standards. Others are more lenient, accepting less reliable certifications without question or "ingredients reading," accepting grocery store items that have no certification but do not contain any identifiably non-kosher ingredients.

As rabbi/humorist Jack Moline noted, "Everyone who keeps kosher will tell you that his version is the only correct version. Everyone else is either a fanatic or a heretic." (Growing Up Jewish, 1987). There is a lot of truth in this humorous observation. I have no doubt that some are calling me a heretic for even acknowledging

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the existence of lower standards, because kosher is kosher, and if you don't live up to *my* standards then you aren't keeping kosher at all.

Kosher Links

You can find more information about kashrut at the websites of major kosher certification organizations.

The Orthodox Union, which is responsible for "OU" certification, has some excellent information on its website, including a kosher primer, an explanation of their kosher policy, a philosophical discussion about "thinking kosher" and a questions and answers section. (Please note: the "Judaism 101" listed on some of their pages is not this website and has no connection with this website).

The Star-K Kosher Certification organization also has an excellent website. The wonderful thing about Star-K is, they give you an incredible amount of detail about the research that they put into determining whether a product is kosher. They tell you what products may be used without kosher certification, and they explain why such products can or cannot be used without kosher certification, giving complete detail about the research that went into making their determination. It also has articles about kashering appliances, and other useful information.

KosherQuest has a searchable database of kosher products as well as an extensive list of reliable kosher symbols and other interesting things.

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OMBUDSMAN SERVICE UNIT
WESTERN REGION

Regional Ombudsman Davis

3-13-15

In my enclosed grievance I make the point that VADoc does not have available or provide in any way a Kosher meal for religious Biblical observant inmates, as a Jewish inmate who requires a kosher diet in my religious beliefs I am being denied a proper kosher diet, in response to my complaint Ms. DeBard Assistant Food Service Supervisor says that Common Fare is a kosher diet, Common Fare is not kosher, to be kosher Common Fare has to be certified kosher and a kosher observant Jewish person would have to be involved in preparations, I have enclosed kosher guidelines which will show without a doubt that Common Fare is not kosher I also provided a list to food service, Mr. Wallis grievance coordinator says this doesn't affect me personally but it does in many ways, I am a Jew, I observe kosher as much as possible with the foods available, no foods served in the dining hall or provided by VADoc are certified kosher and no kosher laws or guidelines are followed in the preparation of foods in the kitchen, again Common Fare nor any other foods served in the kitchen or available from VADoc are kosher, this denies me a kosher diet as is required in the observance of my faith as a Jew.

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OMBUDSMAN SERVICE UNIT
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Respectfully Submitted

B83

Bruce Estes U85724

Jan



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
DIVISION OF OPERATIONS
RIVER NORTH CORRECTIONAL CENTER

B. A. WRIGHT
WARDEN

329 DELLBROOK LANE
INDEPENDENCE, VIRGINIA 24348
(276) 773-2518

March 30, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bruce Estes #1185224 (A-301)
FROM: B. Walls - Offender Grievance Coordinator *B. Walls*
SUBJECT: Grievance Restriction Warning

A review of your regular Grievance and Informal Complaint activity here at RNCC indicates a pattern of excessive filings and habitual misuse. As a result other offenders are being hindered access to the procedure and my staff's ability to investigate and resolve complaints in a timely manner is also hindered. For this reason you are being given a warning for excessive filing and habitual misuse. If this pattern continues you will be limited. No other warnings will be issued.

BW/cs